MANUAL

OF

The First Congregational Church

OF

WOODBRIDGE,

N. J.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

AND

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WOODBRIDGE, N. J.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

On the evening of Sept. 30, 1874, a meeting was held at the house of Mr. John White, to consider the expediency of organizing a church. The meeting was called to order at 8 o'clock, and organized by electing James P. Edgar, Moderator, and George W. Dally, Secretary.

Prayer was offered by Daniel S. Vorhees, Jr.

On motion of C. A. Campbell, it was unanimously voted to organize a church, and the meeting proceeded to elect officers for said organization.

Officers were elected as follows:

Deacons: Lewis D. Kelly, Samuel R. Cutter, James P. Edgar and Daniel S. Voorhees, Jr.

Prudential Committee: Joseph Lockwood, Ezra M. Brewster, Cortland P. Osborn and Ephraim Cutter.

Trustees: Edward J. Thompson, J. Mattison Melick, Charles A. Campbell, John White, Matthias Vanderveer, George F. Fink and William W. Selleck.

Treasurer: J. Mattison Melick.

Clerk: George W. Dally.

A certificate of Incorpation was recorded by the Trustees, Nov. 16, 1874. The first church services were held in

Masonic Hall, Sunday, Oct. 11, 1874. Rev. N. E. Smith, D.D., officiating, and services have since been held in the same place.

A Constitution for the government of the Church and Society, Confession of Faith and Covenant, were adopted Oct. 28, 1874. At this meeting it was also resolved to name the new organization The First Congregational Church, of Woodbridge.

A Council of Congregational Churches, of which Rev. Wm. B. Brown was Moderator, and Rev. Allen McLean was Scribe, formally recognized the new church, November 17, 1874.

During the first six months of its existence the church had no pastor, but obtained supplies for its pulpit from Sabbath to Sabbath. At a joint meeting of the Church and Society held March 8, 1875, a unanimous call was extended to Rev. S. Lee Hillyer, of the senior clsss of Yale Theological Seminary. The call was accepted March 23. Mr. Hillyer had been ordained to the gospel ministry several years previous to this time.

He was installed by a Council called for that purpose June 3, 1875. The Installation Sermon was preached by Rev. George B. Bacon, D.D., from the text Luke 12: 49 and 50.

Rev. William B. Brown gave the charge to the Pastor, and Rev. N. E. Smith, D.D., gave the charge to the people.

Early steps were taken toward the erection of a house of worship. A site was selected and the plan of an edifice adopted. The corner stone of said edifice was laid by the pastor with appropriate services, Sept. 9, 1875.

This building is now nearly completed. A Sabbath-school was organized simultaneously with the Church. It numbered at first twenty-five members, and now numbers one hundred and twenty-five members. From the first, our beloved church has been prospered even beyond the most sanguine hopes of its founders. Its members have contributed liberally for its support, all of its expenses have been promptly met, and a deep and constant religious interest has been manifested.

CONSTITUTION.

We, the members of the First Congregational Church, of Woodbridge, New Jersey, as a guide in administering our ecclesiastical affairs, do adopt the following constitution.

Article I.—Name.

This Society shall be called the "First Congregational Church, of Woodbridge," N. J.

Article II.—Officers.

Sec. 1. The permanent officers of this Church shall consist of a Pastor, four or more Deacons, Prudential Committee, equal in number, and a Clerk, who together, shall constitute the Official Board.

Sec. 2. All officers of the Church shall continue in office until their successors are duly elected, and signify their acceptance, unless sooner excused by vote of the Church.

Article III.—Duties of Officers.

Sec. 1. To the Pastor pertains the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of the Sacraments, the conducting of public religious exercises, and the general spiritual oversight of the Church. He shall, also, if present, be ex-officio Moderator of all religious meetings of the Church.

Sec. 2. The Deacons shall aid the Pastor in the celebration of the Lord's Supper; shall have charge of the Communion Service, and shall provide for the Administration of the Sacraments.

Sec. 3. The Official Board shall examine and propound all candidates for admission to the Church; shall commence all actions of discipline, and shall constantly seek to promote the spiritual welfare of the Church.

Sec. 4. The Clerk shall keep a faithful record of all the doings of the Church, register the names of members, list of

baptisms, and of dismissions from the Church, and at each annual meeting shall make a full statistical report for the year preceding.

Article IV.—Trustees.

Sec. 1. There shall be seven Trustees, three of whom shall be members of the Church. Three retiring the first year, and four the second, and to continue alternately, who shall hold in trust the property, manage the financial affairs of the Church and Society, but shall have no power to buy, sell or transfer real estate, except by a specific vote of the Society directing them so to do.

Sec. 2. The Trustees shall annually elect a Treasurer, who shall receive all moneys belonging to the Church and Society, and shall disburse the same according to the purposes for which the funds were raised, *only* upon the order of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Sec. 3. At each annual meeting the Treasurer and Trustees shall make a full report of the financial condition of the Church and Society, and present such recommendations as may seem to them advisable.

Article V.—Persons Entitled to Vote.

Sec. 1. All persons assessed or pledged to any amount, for the support of the Church, shall be entitled to vote by ballot, for the election of Pastor and Trustees.

Sec. 2. All members in full communion shall be entitled to vote for the permanent officers of the Church.

Article VI.—Terms of Office.

Sec. 1.—The Pastor shall be chosen by the Church, and installed according to the usages of Congregational churches.

Sec. 2. The Trustees shall be elected annually in accordance with Article 4, Section 1.

Sec. 3. The Deacons and Prudential Committee shall be elected from the membership of the Church, and shall hold

their office for the term of two years, one-half of their number to be elected annually.

Sec. 4. The Clerk shall be elected annually, and shall be a member of the Church.

Article VII.—Time of Meeting.

Sec. 1. The Annual Meeting shall be held on the last Wednesday evening of September, in each year, at which time the Officers and Trustees shall be elected. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor, Official Board, Trustees, or upon the written request of ten members of the Church or Society; notice thereof being given from the pulpit on the Sabbath preceding, and ten days notice having been given.

Sec. 2. When a vacancy occurs in any office, the Clerk shall notify the Church and Congregation of the same at the first business meeting thereafter, and the Church shall designate a time for filling such vacancy, of which notice shall be given on the Sabbath preceding.

Sec. 3. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be administered on the first Sabbath of September, December, March and June. The preparatory service shall be held on the Wednesday evenings preceding these Sabbaths, and these shall be also business meetings, at which any matters relating to the interests of the Church may be introduced.

Sec. 4. A meeting for prayer and conference shall be held weekly.

Sec. 5. Ten members of the Church or Society shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

The order of business shall be:

1. Organization.
2. Prayer.
3. Minutes of previous Meeting.
4. Treasurer's Report.
5. Election of Officers.

6. Miscellaneous Business.
7. Prayer.
8. Adjournment.

Article VIII.—Membership.

All who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and can cordially accept the Confession of Faith and Covenant of the Church, will be cheerfully welcomed to its membership.

Article IX.—Dismissions.

Sec. 1. Letters of recommendation will be cheerfully granted by this Church to Evangelical churches of any denomination; *provided* application be made within one year after leaving this Church. In cases of longer delay, unless satisfactory reason be assigned, the applicant shall be entitled to receive a certificate of good standing, only to the time of leaving this Church.

Sec. 2. The request of any member for a letter of recommendation shall be publicly presented, and, if no objection is made in the course of one week, the letter shall be issued in the usual form. If objection is made, a specific vote of the Church shall be taken.

Article X.—Discipline.

Sec. 1. The first object of all discipline in this Church, shall be the restoration and salvation of the accused.

Sec. 2. Any member of this Church having cause of complaint against any other member, shall immediately seek to have the cause removed, according to the law of Christ, recorded in Matthew xviii. 15–17.

Sec. 3. If, in any case, personal efforts for the restoration of an offending member fail, the accusation shall come before the Official Board, and a full hearing shall be granted to the accused, with such counsel as he may elect from the membership of the Church, notice of the time and place assigned for the hearing, together with a copy of the charges preferred,

shall be furnished by the Official Board to the accused in person, or shall be deposited in the postoffice, directed to his last known address, at least ten days previous to the hearing, after which the Board shall lay the matter before the Church, who shall be the sole judge of the censure to be administered to any offending member, amenable only to the great Head of the Church.

Sec. 4. When any member of this Church remains for more than one year a non-attendant upon its services, with no satisfactory reasons, the watch and care of the Church may be withdrawn, and his or her connection may be terminated.

Article XI.

This Constitution may be amended at any annual meeting of the Church, or at any other regular business meeting, by a two-thirds vote of those present; *provided*, notice of the proposed change be given the previous Sabbath. The Confession of Faith and Covenant may be altered at any regular meeting of the Church; *provided*, notice of the change be given on two Sabbaths preceding the meeting, a two-thirds vote being necessary.

In the admission of members, the following Confession of Faith and Covenant shall alone be used:

ARTICLES OF FAITH.

Regarding it our high and holy privilege, as the Disciples of Jesus Christ, to confess Him before men, to unite together as a visible Church, and to enter into the everlasting covenant of grace with God and his people, we adopt the following as

OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH.

ARTICLE I. We believe in one, only, living and true God; the Creator, Preserver and Supreme Ruler of the Universe; revealed to us as Our Heavenly Father; our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; our Sanctifier and Comforter the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE II. We believe in the Holy Scriptures as given by inspiration of God, and as an unerring rule of faith and practice.

ARTICLE III. We believe that the law of God is holy, just and good; that all have sinned; that from the consequent death there is no salvation, except through the work of Jesus Christ and of His Holy Spirit in and for us. We believe that Christ taking our nature, came into the world, suffered and died for us, and that whosoever repents of sin and believes in Him, is freely pardoned and will be sanctified and saved.

ARTICLE IV. We believe that true religion is the possession of the Spirit of Christ; its foundation, faith; its fruits, "the fruits of the Spirit;" its temper, holiness; its aim obedience to God; its end His glory and the soul's eternal joy.

Article V. We believe that a conscientious discharge of the various duties we owe to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow men, as enjoined by Jesus Christ, is binding on every Christian; and affords to himself and to others the only decisive evidence of his interest in the Redeemer.

Article VI. We believe in the sanctity of the Christian Sabbath; in the divine institution of the Family and of the State; in the Sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper; in the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the dead; the final judgment; and the life everlasting.

COVENANT.

To the Candidates:—

You avouch the Lord Jehovah to be your God and the object of your highest love, hope and faith: you consecrate yourselves and yours to Him and to His service forever.

Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as the infinite and only Savior, you sincerely and gratefully receive Him as your Savior, to trust eternally; to love supremely and to serve faithfully, submitting yourselves to be taught and governed by Him in all things.

You desire and by the aid of Divine grace will seek henceforth to follow Him, to learn of Him and to become like Him, to yield yourselves to the quickening and sanctifying influences of His Holy Spirit and to honor Him by a life of piety towards God, and of benevolence toward your fellowmen.

You join yourself (or yourselves) to this Church, and covenant to walk with its members in love; to be kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has loved and forgiven you; to defend its faith and uphold its Godly discipline; labor and pray for its prosperity, purity and peace; to seek the honor and extension of Christ's kingdom in the world; to assemble with His

people for His worship, for His praise, and to commemorate His love; and to strive in all things, to walk worthily of Him who hath called you into His kingdom and glory.

Thus you engage in humble dependence on God, praying that He will enable you to be faithful and steadfast in this covenant.

[*The Church will then rise.*]

We, then, as members of this church, do cordially receive you to our fellowship and communion, and bid you welcome, with us, to all the duties and privileges of Christ's visible Church; may you walk worthy of Him and of your profession, may the Lord guide and preserve you till death; and at last receive you and us to that blessed world where our love and joy shall be forever perfect; and now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

OFFICERS.

PASTOR,

S. LEE HILLYER.

DEACONS,

JAS. P. EDGAR,
LEWIS D. KELLY,
THOS. G. ALLWARD,
DAN'L S. VOORHEES, JR.

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE.

EZRA M. BREWSTER,
JOSEPH LOCKWOOD,
CORTLAND P. OSBORN,
EPHRAIM CUTTER.

TRUSTEES.

E. J. THOMPSON,
EZRA M. BREWSTER,
JOHN WHITE,
J. MATTISON MELICK,
C. A. CAMPBELL,
MATTHIAS VANDERVEER,
GEO. F. FINK.

TREASURER.

J. MATTISON MELICK.

CLERK.

GEO. W. DALLY.

ROLL OF MEMBERS.

ORIGINAL MEMBERS.

Barton, Mrs. Elizabeth J.
Brewster, Ezra M.
Brewster, Mrs. Letitia V.

Campbell, Mrs. Fannie M.
Cutter, Samuel R.
Cutter, Mrs. Harriet P.
Cutter, Mrs. Mary
Cutter, Mary H.
Cutter, Emma R.
Cutter, Ephraim
Cutter, Willie P.

Dally, Geo. W.
Dally, Isabel H.
Demarest, Wm. H.
Demarest, Mrs. Hannah
Demarest, Mrs. Sarah E.
Doremus, Mrs. Jane

Edgar, James P.
Edgar, Mrs. Francis
Edgar, Ellis F.

Fink, Mrs. Nettie
Freeman, Sarah A.
Freeman, Rachel C.
Freeman, Gertrude
Freeman, Virginia

Kelly, Lewis D.
Kelly, Phebe E.
Kelly, Rachel A.

Lockwood, Joseph
Lockwood, Mrs. Alma
Melick, Mrs. Anna H.
Osborn, Cortland P.
Osborn, Mrs. Phebe F.

Thompson, Edward J.
Thompson, Mrs. Ann Maria
Thompson, Anna M.

Vanderveer, Matthias
Vanderveer, Mrs. Harriet P.
Voorhees, Dan'l S., Jr.

Warner, Mrs. Joan.
White, Mrs. Sarah

Received to Membership since Organization—1874.

Demarest, Mrs. Agnes B.
King, Mrs. Jane W.
Lockwood, John

1875.

Allward, Thomas G.
Allward, Mrs. Caroline M.
Allward, Ella S.
Brewster, Mrs. Mary Ann
Campbell, Mrs. Susan Lee
Fink, George F.
Hillyer, S. Lee
Hillyer, Mrs. Ella E.
McVickar, Mrs. Fannie
Selleck, Mrs. Susan M.
Thompson, Isaac D.
Vandeerveer, Mrs. Isabel L.
Vanderveer, Joseph
Voorhees, Mrs. Sarah